

7. (amended) The method of claim + 21 wherein said ~~protease-inhibitor~~ proteins are crosslinked.

8. (amended) The method of claim + 21 wherein said ~~protease-inhibitor~~ proteins are conjugated.

9. (amended) The method of claim 8 wherein said ~~protease-inhibitor~~ protein is alpha1-antitrypsin conjugated with dextran or polyethylene glycol.

10. (amended) The method of claim + 21 wherein said composition includes a corticosteroid.

11. (amended) The method of claim + 21 including the step of separately administering orally a corticosteroid.

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

{ Kindly add the following new claim: }

--21. A method for treating a collagen related autoimmune rheumatoid arthritis which comprises orally administering an effective amount of a protein which has been stabilized so as to transgress the gastrointestinal tract, said protein being the conjugate, crosslinked